EPISTLE

FROM THE HONOURABLE

CHARLES FOX,

PARTRIDGE-SHOOTING,

TO THE HONOURABLE

JOHN TOWNSHEND,

CRUISING.

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EPISTLE, &c.

WHILE you, dear TOWNSHEND, o'er the billows ride,
MULGRAVE in front, and HANGER by thy ſide,
Me it delights the woods and wilds to court,
For ruſtic feats and unambitious ſport.——

At that dim hour when fading lamps expire,
When the laſt, ling'ring, clubs to bed retire,

I riſe!—how ſhould I then thy feelings ſhock,
Unſhav'd, unpowder'd, in my ſhooting frock!
What frock? thou crieſt—I'll tell thee—the old brown;
Trimm'd to a jacket, with the ſkirts cut down—
Thou laugh'ſt; I know, thou do'ſt; but check that ſneer;
What tho' no faſhion'd ſportſman I appear,
Yet hence thy CHARLES's voice gains ſhriller force;
Ah! JACK, if DUNNING ſhot, he'd not be hoarſe.

Nor deem ev'n here the cares of ſtate forgot,
I wad with gazettes ev'ry ſecond ſhot:
ALMON's bold ſheets the intervals ſupply;
And ſtill, methinks, his charges fartheſt fly.

Oft too, while all around my pointers ſtray,
With patriot names I cheer them on their way:
No ſervile miniſterial runners they!

Not

Not RANGER then, but WASHINGTON, I cry;
Hey on! PAUL JONES, re-echoes to the ſky:
Toho! old FRANKLIN—SILAS DEANE, take heed!—
Cheer'd with the ſound, o'er hills and dales they ſpeed:
Till one, to whoſe quick ſenſe and practis'd skill
His active followers yield a haſty will,
Touch'd by the ſcent the paſſing gales convey,
With ſtartled vigilance preſumes the prey:
The reſt a diſciplin'd ſubſervience keep;
Daſh where he runs, and as he crouches, creep:
At length the hoſtile league one point avow:
Now places, places! order, order, now!
" BUNB'RY! let me (I cry) for party's ſake,
" Teach thee where beſt to aim, what ground to take."

And ſee, a young bird riſes, weak and ſlow;
" At him, Sir CHARLES!"—He fires, and lays him low—

Scar'd

Scar'd at the ſound, up the full covey ſprings;
RICHARD at random fires, and only *wings:*
Not ſo thy CHARLES; intent with half-clos'd ſight,
Cautious I watch their veteran leader's flight:
At him I aim, the covey's head and guide;
I fire; but ah! too plainly on one ſide:
Again I try, like *riſing to explain,*
A double barrel's force, but try in vain;
Againſt myſelf the heated tube recoils,
Nor gains one feather to requite my toils.—

But if too ſoon the ſtartled covey riſe,
And move a *previous queſtion* in the ſkies,
My faithful groom quick marks them as they ſpring,
And counts their noſes, undeceiv'd as BYNG:
Whether in cloſe array, and nemine con,
To their old beaten ground the covey's gone;

Or,

Or, ſcattering wild, the petty parties fall,
Some to *pair off*, and ſome to wait a *call*.

Thus from each kindred image, fancy draws
The latent emblem of a nobler cauſe.
If chance, a ſtray, lone, bird my courſe invites,
I think of MEREDITH, and proſelytes;
Mean, mangled, game not for itſelf I prize;
Vengeance and PALLISER to memory riſe.—
Some ſenatorial type ev'n Pointers yield;
One loves too narrow, one too wide a field;
This creeps below, that ſprings above his work,
As HARTLEY ſlow, or uncontroll'd as BURKE.
With rav'nous ardour ſome devour the prey;
O gentle SAWBRIDGE, laſh ſuch fiends away!
Others, with puzzling zeal, ſmall objects mark;
Judicious LUTTRELL, bid them *ware a lark!*—

But come, dear JACK, all martial as thou art,
With ſpruce cockade, heroically ſmart,
Come, and once more together let us greet
The long loſt pleaſures of ST. JAMES's STREET.
Enough o'er ſtubbles have I deign'd to tread;
Too long wer't thou at anchor, at SPITHEAD!

Come, happy friend! to hail thy wiſh'd return,
Nor vulgar fire, nor venal light ſhall burn,
From gentle boſoms purer flames ſhall riſe,
And keener ardours flaſh from Beauty's eyes.
Methinks, I ſee thee now reſume thy ſtand,
Pride of Fop-alley, tho' a little tann'd:
What tender joy the gazing Nymphs diſcloſe!
How pine with envy the neglected Beaux!
While many a feeble frown and ſtruggling ſmile
Fondly reprove thy too adventurous toil,

And ſeem with reprehenſive love to ſay,
" Dear Mr. TOWNSHEND, wherefore didſt thou ſtray!
" What fatal havoc might one ſhot have made,
" If not thy life, thy leg the forfeit paid!
" That ſhot thy foretop might have made it's prey,
" Or ſing'd one dear devoted curl away;
" Or lopp'd that hand, the pride of love and lace;
" Or ſcarr'd, with bolder ſacrilege, thy face."

Soon as to BROOKS's thence thy footſteps bend,
What gratulations thy approach attend!
See GIBBON rap his box; auſpicious ſign,
That claſſic compliment and wit combine;
See BEAUCLERK's cheek a tinge of red ſurpriſe,
And Friendſhip give what cruel Health denies.
Important TOWNSHEND! what can thee withſtand?
The ling'ring black-ball lags in BOOTHBY's hand;

Ev'n

Ev'n Draper checks the ſentimental ſigh,
And Smith, without an oath, ſuſpends the dye.

That night, to feſtive wit and friendſhip due,
That night thy Charles's board ſhall welcome you.
Sallads, that ſhame ragouts, ſhall woo thy taſte;
Deep ſhalt thou delve in Weltjie's motley paſte;
Derby ſhall lend, if not his plate, his Cooks,
And, know, I've bought the beſt Champaigne from Brooks;
From liberal Brooks, whoſe ſpeculative skill,
Is haſty credit, and a diſtant bill;
Who, nurs'd in clubs, diſdains a vulgar trade,
Exults to truſt, and bluſhes to be paid!

On that auſpicious night, ſupremely grac'd
With choſen Gueſts, the pride of liberal Taſte,

Not in contentious heat, nor mad'ning ſtrife,
Not with the buſy ills, nor cares of life,
We'll waſte the fleeting hours; far happier themes
Shall claim each thought, and chaſe Ambition's dreams.
Each *Beauty* that *Sublimity* can boaſt
HE beſt ſhall tell, who ſtill unites them moſt.
Of wit, of taſte, of fancy, we'll debate;
If SHERIDAN for once is not too late:
But ſcarce a thought to miniſters we'll ſpare,
Unleſs on Poliſh Politics, with HARE:
Good natur'd DEVON! oft ſhall then appear
The cool complacence of thy friendly ſneer:
Oft ſhall FITZPATRICK's wit, and STANHOPE's eaſe,
And BURGOYNE's manly ſenſe unite to pleaſe.
And while each gueſt attends our varied feats
Of ſcatter'd covies and retreating Fleets,

Me ſhall they wiſh ſome better ſport to gain,
And Thee more glory, from the next campaign.

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